

May 7, 1999

>Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
>Food and Drug Administration
>5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
>Rockville, MD 20852,
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Dear Gentlepeople,

I have recently been made aware of a frightening development at the Food and Drug Administration. Under pressure from food manufacturers and supporters of the nuclear industry, the FDA is considering a rule that would remove labeling requirements for foods treated with radiation. The public only has until May 18 to voice its objections to this rule. Currently, any food treated with radiation during the production process is labeled with a symbol known as a radura (the international symbol for irradiated foods) and either a statement saying "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation." The rule before the FDA would allow manufacturers to sell any and all irradiated foods to the consumer with nary a mention of the use of radiation during processing. This is bad for consumers.

Despite the fact that the FDA has determined that radiation is safe for food, many consumers, including myself, do not want to eat foods treated with radiation. Radiation changes the texture, taste, nutritional value, and chemical composition of foods. Radiation creates a heretofore unseen class of unique radiolytic products that have never been tested for their possible carcinogenic effects on humans. These are things that I do not want to put into my body.

This is a clear cut issue of a consumer being able to know what is in their food. We know what the fat, protein, carbohydrate, and vitamin content is in our food, why can we not know whether our food has been treated with radiation emanating from some of the most deadly substances known to man?

I implore you, as a constituent and a friend, to write a letter to the FDA about this issue and ask them why your constituents should be kept in the dark about whether their food has been irradiated and why the comment period has been so short. Enclosed you will find the letter that I wrote to the FDA about this issue. I hope it is helpful in formulating your own comments.

It is also clearly visible that environmental illness are on the rise.

It all seems just as clear that adults be allowed to choose their own diet. Health food stores are popping up all over, Alternative Medicine is an ever expanding business... Please help those of us who are ill, because others use deathly pesticides to treat our food. We all have to eat, but we should have the choice to pick what we eat.

What benefit is there to the greater whole, to the citizens of the UNITED States of America, to have the fact of radiation treatment to our food, our nourishment for ongoing life, Hidden from US?

Very little to us, but of some financial benefit to a few. So Please, We do have the right to know what we EAT! It's a simple thing to ask.

Sincerely,

Heather T. Williams
College graduate, w/ Rheumatic pains due to Food Allergies

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